

Something Good by dustin henderson

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Summary: Dustin doesn't tell them that the newest person hoping to fill the empty room in their student home is a girl.

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Dustin doesn't tell them that the newest person hoping to fill the empty room in their student home is a *girl*.

She sits in front of them at their kitchen table and Mike tries not to stare at her, tries not to think about how Dustin also left out the fact that she's pretty, with kind eyes and soft curls that graze her shoulders.

After meeting a series of terrible potential roommates, they'd decided to split the cost of the extra room instead of having someone potentially ruin the school year for the party, but she seems normal. Nice. Definitely less aggressive than Troy from their fourth and final interview.

Dustin and Lucas argue about whether she should be allowed to stay for a while, and Mike grows steadily more uncomfortable as avoids looking at her and wonders how weird it must be to have people argue your fate right in front of you.

Eventually, Will's soft voice breaks through the arguing of the other two, "I think we should let her stay with us."

There's some surprised laughter from Dustin before he quickly agrees.

Lucas turns to him, eyes wide, "C'mon Mike, you gotta tell me you think this is crazy, too. It could ruin our first year of college, it- it could ruin the *party*, Mike."

"I, um..." He stutters. He's had to be the deciding vote in several arguments, but it's never affected somebody else's *life*.

"I know that I'm probably not what you expected in a roommate," she interrupts, voice soft but pleading, "But I... School is so close to starting, and there aren't many people that still need roommates, and I can't- I can't live at home, and... I don't know. I'll be a good roommate. I won't be loud, and I won't have a ton of people over, and it's not like I'm going to take an hour in the bathroom every morning or anything. I won't make things weird or- or difficult for you guys."

He finally lets himself look at her, and her eyes are wide and innocent, and he's not sure how anyone could ever say no to her, but he hesitates, "Promise?"

Her lips quirk into a small smile, "Promise."

He exhales and tries to ignore the feeling that this is a bad idea. "Okay. Okay, when can you move in?"

She flushes when she explains that, actually, she already has all of her stuff outside, and then they're helping her carry in bags of clothes and books (begrudgingly in Lucas' case), and then they have a fifth roommate, and he's living in the same house, on the same floor, as a girl.

"I'm Mike, by the way," he says later, lingering in her room after they've finished hauling in her stuff, eyes meeting hers hesitantly.

"Mike," she repeats warmly, and he's never liked his name more, "My name's Eleven."

He nods, thinking the name's unusual, but not having the nerve to ask about it. "If you need help with anything else, I'm about five feet that way," he says, smiling slightly, and gesturing to his room across the hall.

"I think I'm just gonna get some sleep and leave the unpacking for tomorrow," she replies, mirroring his smile, "Thank you, though."

"No problem," he says, nodding quickly and stepping back towards the door.

"And Mike?" She calls, and he turns, meeting her gaze, "Thank you for... for earlier. I'm not sure what I would've done if I wasn't able to stay here, so... Thank you."

He smiles and lowers his gaze, trying to keep the heat from burning in his cheeks, "Night, El."

"Night, Mike."

Things start to feel a little less weird within the next few weeks.

She gets along well with them. She's also in engineering, so she sits with them in their classes, studies with them in the evenings and laughs with them when Lucas mocks their sternest professor. She's never seen *Star Wars*, but she sits through their marathon one Sunday with fascination in her eyes, and she's the only one who can do a better Chewie impression than Dustin. And she's never played Dungeons & Dragons, but she sits through one of their longest campaigns to date, and she seems to be just as invested in the game as them.

Still, Mike is never any less nervous around her. If anything, it gets worse, because he knows her as more than a girl now. He knows that she's smart, that she's funny, that she's kind, and that she's a little bit nerdy (and even more nerdy with every day that she spends with them). And he knows, although he won't admit it (especially to Dustin, who sends him a knowing smirk every time he sees him interacting with her), that he could easily love her.

He introduces her to Eggos, and he tries to stifle a laugh when Dustin makes actual waffles a week later and Eleven remarks that she likes the frozen ones better.

She rests her head on his shoulder while they watch *Back to the Future*, and he looks down at her during the credits to find that she's fallen asleep. When he tries to wake her, she murmurs his name and snuggles closer to him, and he realizes he's sleeping on the couch.

They talk about their parents, and she tells him about her papa and how she couldn't live with him anymore, and he tells her about his parents and the divorce that he knows is coming.

They're brushing their teeth next to each other one morning, and she smiles at him in the mirror, and he's not sure when it happened, but he knows that he loves her.

When their first semester ends, and it's time for them all to return to their families for the holidays, Mike and Eleven are the last ones to leave. On the morning that he's supposed to leave, he waits in the kitchen for Eleven to come downstairs, a plate of Eggos and a small giftbag on the table next to him.

She walks into the kitchen, rubbing her eyes and smiling at him as usual, and she stops when she sees the gift. She turns to him, and her eyes are wide as she says, "For me?"

He nods, smiling shyly and watching her open the gift in silence. It's a dress, white and lacy and Nancy-approved, and he watches as she admires it, smiling and running her fingers over the fabric. She turns her attention to him, and her eyes are bright as she asks, "What's this for?"

"Well, for Christmas, but I, uh..." he hesitates, reaching a hand up to shake through his hair, "I thought you could wear it to Christmas dinner at my family's place. If you wanted to come, I mean."

She's quiet, and she bites into her lip as she looks at him, and he feels panic rising in his throat.

"You don't have to, I mean- I know that you wouldn't want to go home for the holidays, and I didn't want you to be alone, especially for Christmas. I just thought- I don't know. And if you did want to, you don't have to wear the dress. It's just that my mom likes us to dress up when the rest of my family is over, because you're- you're- I mean, you're *you* and she'll love you no matter what you're wearing. Not that it really matters, I just-"

His rambling is cut off by the press of her lips against his, and he's frozen for a second before he understands that *this is really happening*. He lifts a hand to run it through her hair, and it's just as soft as her lips on his, and he hopes his mother hung up mistletoe because this can't be the only time he gets to experience this.

"Mike," she breathes once she's pulled away, and he's still not completely convinced that he hasn't died because this has to be heaven, "Thank you. I'd love to come with you."

He grins and leans down to catch her lips again, and they only eventually break apart when she pulls away and whines that her Eggos are going to get cold.

A/N: so i uploaded a different version of this fic yesterday, but this is

my first fic in a loooooong time and i got indecisive about how i wanted to write it! so i rewrote the whole thing and changed my mind from a multi-chapter to a one-shot. so i'm very sorry for the confusion! as for the future of this fic, i definitely think i will write more, but it will be distinct moments, so it reads more like a collection of one-shots rather than a series of chapters if that makes any sense? idk but i hope you like it, and please let me know if you have any requests!